WEST AFRICA'S WAR ON TERRORISM: TIME AND PATIENCE

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL TRYGVE B. TROSPER
United States Army National Guard

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U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

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by

Lieutenant Colonel Trygve B. Trosper
United States Army National Guard

Professor Thomas Dempsey
Project Adviser

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

It has become increasingly important to examine the issue of the fragility of nation states. This issue is relevant to the United States (US) strategic interests as the US continues its fight on the global war on terrorism. In particular, many fragile countries in West Africa have been labeled as either fragile and/or weak states. Weak states are the result of insufficient governance, inadequate infrastructures, corruption, civil war, unprotected borders, and/or tenuous economic structures. The primary intent of this paper is to examine how poor governance is a leading factor in the creation of terrorism in West African countries. Many West African governmental structures are characterized by corrupt neo-patrimonial and/or military regimes. I assert that poor governance is the primary cause for terrorism in West Africa. As weak governments increase in West Africa, the potential for terrorist safe havens to flourish within various regions might also increase. This poses a serious challenge for both West Africa and U.S. national security. Additionally, the roles of the U.S. instruments of national power will be examined. These instruments are crucial because they could serve as a catalyst to effectively produce change within West Africa.

WEST AFRICA'S WAR ON TERRORISM: TIME AND PATIENCE

> One of the main sources of terrorism is chronically bad governance. The international campaign against terrorism can thus be characterized as a new Cold War: a strategy for victory requires the creation of regimes that can achieve universal goals of freedom and development…Towards this end, the United States should not only substantially increase its foreign assistance budget, but also devote a much larger portion of that budget to democracy and good governance programs
>
> —Larry Diamond
> Winning the New Cold War on Terrorism[1]

It can be asserted, that poor governmental practices throughout West Africa have contributed to the preponderance of domestic terrorism. According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), "Weaknesses in democratic governance and factors contributing to fragility inhibit social development and economic growth, can cause civil unrest and provide fertile ground for the rise of extremist ideologies."[2] It is proposed that the establishment of good governance within West Africa will address and alleviate the potential for a breakdown in its social and political structures:

> Good governance has 8 major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision making. It also responsive to the present and future needs of society.[3]

Additionally, the promotion of sound governmental practices within West Africa will increase foreign direct investments within the region. William Brown writes in, "The Commission for Africa: Results and Prospects for the West's Africa Policy," that, "The reason why governance occupies such a central place is because the particular model of governance that donors promote, and African governments give lip-service to, is seen

as central to providing the kind of architecture within which liberal capitalist development can happen."[4] Therefore, as the US continues its counter-terrorism efforts in West Africa to protect its strategic economic interests, so must West African governments, shift their policies toward a more democratic ideology.

The term *regime de la terreur* used during the French Revolution is considered to be the origin of the word terrorism. During this period, *regime de la terreur's* original connotation was positive because its leaders believed that the results of their actions were to create a new and better society.[5] Maximilien Robespierre stated that, "Terror is nothing but justice, prompt, severe and inflexible; it is therefore and emanation of virtue."[6] However, after Robespierre's execution the meaning of terrorism became synonymous with "abuse of office and power."[7] The African Union Plan of Action defines terrorism as:

> A violent form of transnational crime that exploits the limits of territorial jurisdiction of States, differences in governance systems and judicial procedures, porous borders, and the existence of informal and illegal trade and financing networks.[8]

Currently, the FBI defines terrorism as, "The unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives."[9] This definition of terrorism is aligned with that of the military and is delineated in Joint Publication 3-07.2.

Claire Woodside states in "West Africa: America's Foreign Policy Post 911 and the 'Resource Curse,' A Head on Collision," "The United States has determined that unimpeded access to African oil is a national security interest of the United States."[10] As a result, the US government has increased its military funding to combat terrorist threats in West Africa to protect its oil reserves in the region.[11] Increasingly, West Africa is

globally gaining economic attention based upon the interests and competition for its vast resources. Additionally, socio-political issues have recently come into the forefront, as this region has become a burgeoning epicenter for transnational terrorism. The US has vested national interests in the resources in West Africa. In Cyril Obi's "Terrorism in West Africa: Real, emerging or imagined threats?," he emphasizes the importance of US interests in West Africa, stating, that this region is exporting 15% of its oil to the US; however, the region is projecting that it will increase oil exports to 25% by 2020.[12]

The US, as a stabilizing authority, produced the 2006 National Security Strategy (NSS) to promote freedom, justice, effective democracies, and to defeat terrorism on a global level.[13] The desired objective for the US in the 2006 NSS is "…to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."[14] Furthermore, the central goal is for ungoverned states to become politically stable and to acquire democratic principles of governance. Jessica Piombo writes in "Terrorism and U.S. Counter-Terrorism Programs in Africa: An Overview," that "The issue of ungoverned spaces, poor governance capacity, authoritarian regimes and an inability to control territories beyond those in the capital city is not new in Africa."[15]   As a result of poor governance within these localities, US attempts to develop sound governmental rule in West Africa might face extreme opposition. Additionally, due to political instability, conflicts, poverty, socio-economics, and tumultuous governmental practices, experts foresee burgeoning terrorist strongholds infiltrating into the West African region.[16]

Furthermore, this ongoing corruption continues to weaken the hope of sound political and governmental structures, which is suspected of creating places of

protection and training for terrorist's groups/organizations. Author John Davis writes in *Africa and the War on Terrorism*, that , "Viewed collectively, al Qaeda utilizes political violence as a source of recruitment and propaganda, the result of which has increased instability and chaos in countries within the continent."[17] If ineffective governmental structures are absent, then terrorist ideologies have the opportunity to firmly root themselves within a society, in order to fulfill the voids created out of incompetent rule. In "Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and Norms in Africa" Samuel M. Makinda asserts:

> Indeed, while it is reasonable to argue that terrorism is a threat to norms, rules and institutions, it also possible to show that terrorism is a product of norms, rules and institutions. Terrorism is driven by the same factors that make security possible; the need for development, health care, education, self-determination democratic governance, human rights, emancipation, and human dignity. Terrorism may be a threat to international law and other conventions, but it is also motivated by some of the values that underpin international norms, rules and institutions.[18]

Historically, a West African legacy of corruption and oppressive military regimes has dominated the region. West African governmental rule is rooted in colonial domination which has traditionally operated as a police state. Ambassador Ronald D. Palmer writes that these governments operated by oppressing their people. He states, "It is useful to remember that colonial administrations ran what were essentially police states whose legitimacy rested on a monopoly of force. This lesson was not lost on local observers. The key to power was the gun, which brought the key to the treasury."[19] This ideology has been inculcated in most of the West African predecessors during the post-colonial era. This ongoing tyranny has helped to establish poor and ineffective forms of government throughout West Africa. Ultimately, this has resulted in making West African regions vulnerable to terrorist strongholds.

The 2006 *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (NSCT) recognizes the importance of establishing effective democratic rule to counter-terrorism. This long-term approach addresses issues which give rise to terrorism such as; political alienation, grievances that can be blamed on others, subcultures of conspiracy and misinformation, and an ideology that justifies murder.[20] More specifically, many of the indigenous people within West Africa do not have an active or participatory voice in their countries. In 2006, President George Bush stated, "Without a stake in the existing order, they [the politically alienated or disenfranchised indigenous populations within the global society] are vulnerable to manipulation by those who advocate a perverse political vision based on violence and destruction."[21] Additionally, many terrorist organizations continuously use radical ideological rhetoric which keeps inflammatory issues in the political forefront. Terrorist organizations rely on propagandist notions, which keep the masses from acquiring the facts and then being able to make decisions based on a full disclosure of information. Finally, terrorist have distorted religion in the attempt to justify killing as well as to justify their rash ideologies.

Moreover, the manipulative approaches used by terrorist organizations, can effectively root systemic practices in West African society. Terrorist organizations can bring to the forefront, the history of colonialism in its efforts to recruit disenfranchised Africans. In "Globalization and its Impact on the War on Terror" Judy Duncker writes:

> The madrassas, however, are the centers of learning based on the sharia legal code. This is where indoctrination and transmission of anti-globalization, anti-American and anti-Western sentiments occur and where students prepare for the world-wide jihad and the creation of a global Islamic community (ummah). [22]

The global war on terrorism is a protracted effort which can not be altered swiftly. Therefore, it is appropriate for the US to acknowledge that a long-term strategy is

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needed for the establishment of effective democracies. The US 2006 NSS addresses the instruments of national power as a means to establish legitimate democracies globally. More importantly, in the effort to counter-terrorism one must first try to identify the root causes of terrorism. The 2006 NSS and NSCT do not directly identify the root causes of terrorism. However, both documents do go into great length to connect how democratic governance can serve as a method to thwart terrorism. The 2006 NSS states that, "Because democracies are the most responsible members of the international system, promoting democracy is the most effective long-term measure for strengthening international stability: reducing regional conflicts; countering terrorism and terror-supporting extremism; and extending peace and prosperity."[23]

Many experts argue that a myriad of issues inform terrorism. Research conducted by Jakkie Cilliers identifies climate change, competition over resources, marginalization of the majority world, and global militarization as root causes for terrorist activities.[24] However, this paper will specifically seek to examine poor governance, economics, and religious ideology and how they potentially act as determinants for terrorism. Lastly, the paper will explore the implementation of stability operations to counterterrorism in the West African region.

Linkage between State Instability and Terrorism

Supporting the development of good governance in West Africa is paramount to the US's counterterrorism strategy. Poor governance in West Africa has helped to increase terrorist activities on both a national and international level. For example, the inability to provide stable governance was evident when al Qaeda was linked to the smuggling of diamonds from Sierra Leone and then selling them in Liberia.[25] This lack

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of governance and oversight allowed money laundering to occur and helped al Qaeda to fund their terrorist activities. Cilliers writes, "In this manner al Qaeda was able to use the cover of violently chaotic conditions in these two countries [Sierra Leone and Liberia] to launder money and buy arms, evading the effective surveillance or sanction by the international community including US counterterrorism forces."[26] The domestic forms of terrorism are rampant in many African countries which are result of intra and inter conflicts associated with ethnic, clan, tribal, and religious rivalries.[27] When this poor governance is allowed to exist, it becomes a sign for terrorist groups to organize and capitalize on the weaknesses of a country's political and economic turmoil.

Therefore, to address the impact of poor governance on terrorism, the US support for democracy in West Africa can facilitate a "form of government that is based on the empowerment of ordinary citizens so that they have more say in the day-to-day running of the affairs of their state."[28] The government in each of the countries should have sound governance. Dele Olowu writes in "Governance and Policy Management in Africa," that, "Good governance is conceived from a process perspective with emphasis on rule of law, accountability, participation, transparency, and human and civil rights."[29] Furthermore, Anneli Botha opines in, "Challenges in Understanding Terrorism in Africa: A Human Security Perspective," that supporting good governance means that, "There is a high degree of political continuity in a political system, which allows free political participation and dissent."[30] Historically, these freedoms have been virtually non-existent and have served as an area of contention in most West African countries. Tatah Mentan writes in chapter 5 "State, Permissive Environment, and Mass Terrorism" in *Dilemmas of Weak States: Africa and Transnational Terrorism in the Twenty-first*

Century, "Of the forty-one sub-Saharan African nations only a few (Senegal, South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Benin, Botswana, and Mauritius) allow their people the right to vote and chose their own leaders. Only two (Botswana and Senegal) permit freedom of expression and criticism of government policies."[31]

It is presently known that many countries in West Africa are operating under weak governmental rule and are vulnerable to become a terrorist stronghold. Poor governance is linked to terrorism because with absence of the basic characteristics of good governance corruptions, organized crime, and poverty is allowed to exist. According to Douglas Farah, in a speech before the *House Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on Africa*, April 1, 2004, he stated, "The conditions that favored al Qaeda in West Africa: corruption; conflicts over natural resources that are little studied or understood; lack of government control in vast areas; the emergence of sophisticated organized criminal networks; all continue to exist."[32] Additionally, Obi argues that "given historical and cultural factors and the political instability, poverty, socio-economic and governance crisis and conflicts that have ravaged the region, it could be potentially vulnerable to terrorism."[33]

Finally, Nigeria is another example of how poor governance could potentially create a sanctuary for terrorists. Since its independence in 1960, Nigeria has been primarily under military rule, for 28 of its 47 years.[34] This indicates that coups were the mode for some of these transfers of power.[35] The history of military dictatorships or autocratic rule has fostered a legacy of governmental rule that can be classified as one which practices patrimonial rule and clientelism. This behavior has created a poorly run

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government that practices injustice, inequality and inequity amongst Nigeria's population.[36]

To defeat terrorism in West Africa the US is providing aid to countries to encourage good governance. To respond to the poor governance in Nigeria, in 2007 the US provided Nigeria with over $12 million in assistance which was directed at improving governance. The Bush administration requested $487 million for 2009. This aid is directed at providing additional support for democratic governance as well as funding to improve education, health services, economic reform, and HIV/AIDS programs.[37] Therefore, the long-term benefits of establishing effective governance in Nigeria will allow the Nigerians to begin a process of self-correcting a corrupt system and provide a strong democracy for all citizens regardless of religion, ethnicity, or tribal affiliation.

Finally, there exists a linkage between poor governance and terrorism, which ultimately has the potential for creating instability in West Africa. Max Worcester made the statement in an interview conducted by the Institut für Strategic-Politk-Sicherheits- und Wirtschaftberatung that "As I have said, this lack of governance is the root cause of poverty, inequality, poor health care and many of the problems which Africa faces today. Lack of governance is the main cause of terrorism and also a hindrance in the fight against terrorism."[38] West Africa is comprised of sixteen countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. These countries that comprise the West African region have been labeled as some of Africa's most unstable regions.[39] The instability of this region is a strategic concern for the US

because of oil, natural resources, and its geographical location to US markets. Additionally, the US believes that West Africa has the potential for producing more failed states within the region, like Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Somalia."[40] Mentan, writes, "The great majorities of African citizens exist in poverty and are locked under corrupt leaders who maintain control through tribalism, fraud, corruption, prebendalism and violence. In this perspective, Africa can be seen as a giant experiment in the genesis of terrorism."[41]

The Department of The Army Field Manual (FM) 3-07 defines a fragile state as "a country that suffers from institutional weakness serious enough to threaten the stability of the central government."[42] FM 3-07 also states that ineffective governance is a root cause in the creation of a fragile state.[43] There are historical anecdotes to explain why a majority of West African countries have had ineffective governance, where they did not apply effective and fair control over their people. Patrick J. McGowan writes in "Coups and Conflict in West Africa, 1955-2004: Part II, Empirical Findings," That a major cause for ineffective governance is the historical military rule which dominated post-colonial West Africa from 1962 to 2003.[44] The post-colonization period of military led coups d' etat that West Africans experienced, continues to resonate in the way the government governs it people.

West Africa celebrates the fact that it produced the first country, Ghana which gained its independence in 1957 from European colonial rule. Consequently, this region experienced the first successful military coup d'état in January 1963 in Togo.[45] The military coup d'état continued throughout the region from 1962-2003 touching fifteen of the sixteen countries. Cape Verde and Senegal have been fortunate to avoid any successful overthrow of its government by the military or other rogue forces. Although,

Senegal did have one coup attempt in 1962 -it ultimately failed.[46] The results of this

kind of rule created the current political instability in West Africa. In "Military Coups in

Africa-The African "Neo-Colonialism" That is Self-Inflicted" Major Jimmi Wangome

writes:

> …as government after government fell victim to the coup d' etat across the continent. The new military rulers accused the civilian government of everything from corruption and incompetence to mismanagement of the national economy. However, experience in Africa has shown that the military are no better than civilians when it comes to running governments. Rather than solve African contemporary political and socio-economic problems, military coup d' etat in Africa have tended to drive the continent into even further suffering and turmoil.[47]

Ultimately, many West African governments have been ineffective and have

been unsuccessful in providing the basic needs for its citizens. For example, 75% of the

population in West Africa lives under a governmental system that cannot provide basic

services to its people. Therefore, it can be surmised that this environment is the impetus

for terrorists to propagate corruption and terror within West Africa.[48]   The Failed State

Index is an index that uses 12 social, economic, political, and military indicators to rank

177 states globally.[49] The index measures a states' vulnerability to violent internal

conflict and societal deterioration, but the index does not predict when a state will

collapse or fail.[50] The rank order is based on the sum of the scores from the 12

indicators with a range of scores from 0-120. The scores are divided into four

categories: Alert (Red) 120-90; Warning (Orange) 89.9-60; Monitoring (Yellow) 59.9-30;

and Sustainable (Green) 29.9-0.[51] The scores for all West African countries range from

a high 104.6 in Cote d'Ivoire, to a low 64.6 in Ghana.[52] According to these scores the

countries of West Africa are very vulnerable to conflict or collapse.

The status of West African countries for conflict or collapse indicated by the 2008 Failed States Index suggests that West African States need to establish good governance to empower the people, end corruption, and eliminate intra conflicts that encourage terrorism. In a 2004 *Washington* Post article, authors Farah and Shultz stated that, "The fragile states that dominate the region provide lawless sanctuaries where terrorist gangs (including al Qaeda) and crime syndicates organize, recruit, buy weapons, or simple hide."[53]   Therefore, to prevent these fragile states from harboring terrorists US bilateral involvement is vital. Seth D. Kaplan, writes in *Fixing Fragile States: A New Paradigm for Development*, that "If states are to be successful, they must be made more relevant to their population by interconnecting them with local, informal, internally driven political and economic processes, and not divorced and autonomous from the societies they are supposed to serve, which is the situation now."[54]

Linkage between Economics and Terrorism

In West Africa the economic opportunities for the ruling elite and the lack of prosperity for many in the general population both have their linkages to terrorist's financing and provide a ready pool of poor West African recruits using economic inducements. Economically, West African countries like other African countries have an abundance of natural resources. These natural resources include: "oil, liquid natural gas, uranium, coal, gold, diamonds, copper, lead, zinc, cobalt, tin, and platinum."[55] Additionally, West Africa has agricultural commodities such as; cocoa, coffee, cotton, palm, rubber, and groundnuts.[56] However, the lack of equitable distribution of the wealth from these products is the greatest problem. The political elites are pillaging the profits creating an imbalance within the population. For example, in Nigeria, "over the

period, 1965-2004, income per capita fell from $250 to $212; income inequality icreased

markedly over the same period. Between 1970 and 2000 in Nigeria, the number of

people subsisting on less than one dollar a day grew from 36 percent to more thant 70

percent."[57] It has been reported that "al-Qaeda purchased between $30 million and $50

million worth of diamonds from the former Liberian President Charles Taylor during the

eight months prior to 9/11."[58] Additionally, terrorist organizations like al Qaeda and

Hezbollah networks are benefiting from the economic disparities in West Africa,

especially from the illegal/informal economy system known as the 'shadow' economy.

O'Brien and Karasik write in a "Case Study: West Africa," that "In many developing

countries, a significant informal or "shadow" economy exists, which is a result of the

underdevelopment of the national economy and an avenue by which members of these

societies can maintain financial activities out of the government's sight."[59] Finally, these

informal economies are very attractive to terrorist because it allows terrorists to keep

their transaction hidden from public scrutiny.[60]

It is hypothesized that these informal economies give rise to internal conflicts, as

well as an avenue for transnational extremists to fund their activities. As stated before,

al Qaeda traded with Hezbollah using "conflict diamonds" to move money around to

support their illegal activities.[61] Furthermore, the "shadow" system also exists within the

timber market, narcotics, human-trafficking, currency, and weapons. These informal

economic systems are breeding grounds for criminal networks. Therefore, these

"shadow" systems will continue to pose a problem to the US's countering of terrorism

efforts.

In "Coups and Conflict in West Africa, 1955-2004: Part II, Empirical Findings"

McGowan writes, "Poverty is one of the root causes of West African coups and

conflicts."[62] Historically these conflicts in West Africa were based on faulty territorial or

state boundaries which were remnants of the colonial era.[63] Today, the poverty within

these countries leads to alienation of the poor which makes for a fertile recruiting base

for terrorist groups. Warlords will continue to recruit these young unemployed men for

conflicts.[64] Simultaneously, unemployment has corrupted former soldiers who are now

involved in crime and corruption in order to make money.[65] It appears that the poverty

trends within Africa will persist. According to the United Nation Development

Programme, many West African countries will not rise above poverty until 2165.[66] This

is a very bleak picture for a region that has so many economic options. The US and its

allies can begin to support the regions by "removing their tariffs and farm subsidies."[67]

McGowan asserts:

> As the periphery of the periphery, the region's states are poor, weak, and
> mainly autocratic. The region's class structures, which derive from its
> position in the world-system, are not conducive to the establishment of
> stable democracies. These structural features promote political instability
> and conflict that in turn, encourage selfish, predatory political leadership.
> Poor leadership further impoverishes the states of West Africa and keeps
> them locked in the periphery.[68]

Linkage between Radical Ideology and Terrorism

West Africa like the rest of the continent has a rapidly growing Muslim population.

According to Paz and Terdman in their article "Islam's Inroads," they assert that Islam is

the second largest religion in Africa and West Africa has the highest concentration of

African Muslims.[69] Therefore, many experts presume that there is linkage between West

African Muslim and terrorists. The Muslim linkage is defined as those Muslims who are

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followers of the radical forms of Islam. Obi states that, "…the linkage being drawn

between al-Qaeda and radical/militant forms of political Islam that are clearly anti-

American/Western, many strategic thinkers and analysts are of the view that Muslims in

West Africa may provide a sanctuary for terrorists."[70] Therefore, the issue that currently

faces the US is the radical ideology of Islam which is currently spreading in many West

African countries, posing a threat to US strategic security interest.

Currently, radical Islam is considered to be the prevailing ideology which

promotes transnational terrorism. These teachings spread divisiveness between

Westerners and poor Muslims.[71] However, these radical followers of Islam are mainly

from the Middle East. In West Africa, the Muslim population is projected to be about

15% or 150 million people of the world's total Muslim population.[72] Therefore, the

growing radical/militant Muslim population in West Africa is unsettling to the US and

other Western nations.

The linkage between radical and rigid interpretation of Islam and terrorism is

moving through West Africa. For example, at least half of Nigeria's population is Muslim

and 12 out of its 36 states have adopted Islamic Sharia Law.[73] The Sharia Law has

created tensions between the Muslims and the Christians of Nigeria. Currently, the

relation between radical and terrorism in Nigeria is regarded to be local versus

international. Muslims in Nigeria who are considered followers of the jihadist movement

are currently conducting local insurgent or terrorist activities. O'Brien and Karasik write,

"This is an indication that West African militants may not be interested in the global

Islamic struggle but in their local causes."[74]   Finally, the lack of education, poverty,

corruption have contributed to the spread of radical Islamic ideology[75] and as Paul

Marshall states, "Nigeria is further proof, if any were needed, that radical Islam is not created or driven by opposition to U.S. policy on Israel. It is an aggressive, worldwide ideological movement with its sights set on Africa and Asia as much as the Middle East."[76]

Primary Linkage to Terrorism is Poor Governance

Based on above analysis it has been asserted that poor governance is the primary linkage to the on-going and growing local terrorist factions in many West African countries. Souare writes…"the root cause of armed conflicts in West Africa: bad governance and the ills that emanate from it…to prevent armed conflicts should primarily be the reverse of this trend – that is good governance."[77] Secondly, the linkage between poor governance and terrorism has begun to breed transnational terrorists in West Africa. According to Cilliers, "The linkages between poor or absent governance and terrorism were provided in the allegations of al-Qaeda's connections to the illegal trade in rough diamonds mined in Sierra Leone and then smuggled and sold in Liberia."[78] The establishment of sound governance is the beginning to an end for governmental corruption at the state and local level, ending informal economies and providing needed education and jobs to the exploding youth population that is currently being alienated. The direction of the US strategy to counterterrorism in West Africa has to focus on solving the problem of poor governance. Establishing good governance in West Africa is the start that these countries will require in order to put an end to years of misrule, poverty, and corruption. In the article "Winning the Cold War on Terrorism: The Democratic-Governance Imperative" Larry Diamond states:

> If we [US] are serious about getting at the roots of international terrorism,
> we must get serious about fostering development that give people hope

and dignity and improves the quality of their lives.   That requires improvements in governance, and these will not come without increased international incentives and assistance…The problem is a more fundamental shortage: of the institution and norms of democracy and good governance.[79]

US Strategy: An Integrated Approach

The US strategic approach for good governance in West Africa is to implement an integrated approach that links the stability tasks of the military and civil stability sectors. This integrated approach is designed to address drivers such as: "religious fanaticism, climate change, residual territorial claims, ideology, ethnic tension, elitism, greed, and global competition for resources,"[80] that are currently present in many West African countries. Thus, most of the drivers eventually lead to a state's fragility, which can ultimately result in poor governance. This integrated approach has the potential to help solve the prevalence of problems within West African countries.

It is important to note, that for ideal conditions to be achieved, synergy between the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of State (DoS) are crucial. However, both departments are controlled by two different Directives. DoD's purpose is directed by the DoD Directive 3005.05, which states that its mission:

> Provides guidance on stability operations that will evolve over time as joint operating concepts, mission sets, and lessons learned develop… Establishes DoD policy and assigns responsibilities within Department of Defense for planning, training, and preparing to conduct and support stability operations pursuant to the authority vested in the Secretary of Defense…[81]

DoS's purpose is directed by the National Security Presidential Directive 44 states, which states that its mission is:

> …to promote the security of the United States through improved coordination, planning, and implementation of reconstruction and stabilization (R&S) assistance for foreign states and regions at risk of, in,

or in transition from conflict or civil strife. The Directive states that the Secretary of State shall coordinate and lead integrated United States Government efforts, involving all U.S. Departments and Agencies with relevant capabilities, to prepare, plan for, and conduct stabilization and reconstruction activities.[82]

Though these directives explicitly outline the separate missions for DoD and DoS, the integration of the two are essential to helping West Africans solve their poor governance problems. Successful integration or a 'whole of government' approach "requires that all actors are represented, integrated, and actively involved in the process; share an understanding of the situation; integrate and synchronize capabilities and activities; and collectively determine the resources, capabilities, and activities necessary to achieve their goal."[83]

Military

Stability operations are defined by the Joint publication 3-0 as:

An overarching term encompassing various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.[84]

Stability operations conducted by the military are to support legitimate governance and terminate terrorism in West African countries. "The military support to governance focuses on restoring public administration and resuming public services while fostering long-term efforts to establish a functional, effective system of political governance."[85] However, the military has several other stability operations tasks to perform that are all interconnected. These tasks are to: "establish civil security; establish civil control; restore essential services; support to governance; and support to economic and infrastructure development."[86]

18

The United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) is the military regional headquarters in Africa that would execute stability operations in West Africa. Successful executions of all stability operations tasks are important to improving security, eroding support for terrorism, and enabling West African to combat terrorism. However, to support governance, AFRICOM's specific task is to:

> Focus on restoring public administration and resuming public services while fostering long-term efforts to establish a functional, effective system of political governance…military forces helps shape the environment for extended unified action by other partners… [military] efforts…enable the host nation to develop an open political process, a free press, a functioning civil society, and legitimate legal and constitutional frameworks.[87]

Additionally, the President of the US, Secretary of Defense, or the Geographical Combatant Command (GCC) can choose to stand up a Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) and assign a joint force commander to operate in the designated joint operation area.[88] Nevertheless, a country or region in West Africa must first be prioritized based on national security interest before a CJTF can be assigned and stability operations can begin.

Civilian

Simultaneously, the Department of State's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) is available to help stabilize and reconstruct the governmental transition of countries in West Africa by leading, coordinating, and institutionalizing U.S. government civilian capacity to prepare the countries for a seamless transition. The S/CRS is responsible for executing five stability sectors: security; justice and reconciliation; humanitarian assistance and social well-being; governance and participation; and economic stabilization and infrastructure.[89] In the

case of West Africa, the focus of S/CRS sector's role is governance and participation. The governance and participation sector has several tasks that are central to the establishment of good governance in West Africa. The governance tasks are: 1) National Constituting Processes; 2) Transitional Governance; 3) Executive Authority; 4) Legislative Strengthening; 5) Local Governance; and 6) Transparency and Anti-Corruption.[90]

In addition, participation tasks are: 1) Elections; 2) Political Parties; 3) Civil Society and Media; and 4) Public Information and Communications.[91] These essential tasks are then employed in a three phase approach, initial response, transformation, and fostering sustainability with distinct goals for each phase.[92] This phase approach executed by S/CRS and other cabinet level departments will take and patience. Finally, coordination between the GCC and S/CRS is needed to make sure all efforts are united in the "pursuit of a common goal and shared understanding of the desired end state"[93] of establishing good governance throughout the West African countries.

Conclusion

The US must shore up its role in the effort to help in transforming West Africa from a region ruled by tyranny, to one where democracy can flourish. The US strategic interests in West Africa will continue as long as the US has a geopolitical dependency on oil and natural resources. Additionally, as the number of weak or failing countries continues to grow, the potential for terrorist safe havens will also grow. The Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates asserts that the US must play a continued and vital role in the building of strong nation states within West Africa. He states, "The requirement for the

U.S. military to maintain security, provide aid and comfort, begin reconstruction, and stand up local government and public services will not go away."[94]

As the US seeks to control its interests in West Africa, it must be cautious in its efforts, as to not be perceived as presenting itself as being a colonialist within the region. This perception is germane because some scholars contend that the US is exaggerating the transnational terrorist threat in West Africa. Critics argue that that "no terrorist strike has occurred in West Africa."[95] Additionally, no designated foreign terrorist organization existed before 2001 in Sub-Saharan Africa.[96] Moreover, terrorist activities in Africa have only occurred at the local and sub-national level.[97] The US must move away from short-term political and military campaigns within West Africa. The desired goal should be to help West Africans create political, military, educational/health care, economic, and democratic systems in West Africa. These efforts will ensure that an autonomous West Africa can sustain positive growth for many years to come.

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